NOTIFICATIONS AND PAPERS CONNECTED WITH THE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

NOTES

of a meeting held in the compound of Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, Plague Commissioner in Mysore at 8 A. M. on Monday the 14th February 1898.

PRESENT.

Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, Plague Commissioner
Surg. Lt. Col. P. H. Benson
Mr. T. T. Leonard
,, G. G. Noronha,

and the following leading Merchants and Representatives of the different sections of the community :—

1. Mr. Mir Muhammad Gouse Sahib
2. ,, Khaji Ahmedulla Sheriff Sahib
3. ,, Sheer Khan Sahib
4. ,, Munshi Khader Mohadin
5. ,, Khader Abbas Sahib
6. ,, Abdulla Khan Sahib
7. ,, Ibrahim Sahib
8. ,, A. Gopalacharlu
9. ,, Ahmed Shah Sahib
10. ,, Sadar Timmappa
11. ,, Sampannaiya's Dodda Muniyappa
12. ,, Virajasetti Chikka Basanna
13. ,, Do Nanjundappa
14. ,, Sinde Lakshmana Rao
15. ,, Setti Shamanna
16. ,, P. Timmaiya
17. ,, Kottige Muniyappa
18. ,, Kempanna
19. ,, Mandi Huchanna
20. ,, Setlur Krishnaiengar
21. ,, Kantina Nanjundappa
22. ,, Venkatarama Sastri, Cloth-merchant
23. ,, Basettara Narayana Setti
24. Mr. Polepalli Narasimmaiya
25. ,, Do Sankaraiya
26. ,, Do Narayanasami Setti
27. ,, Chinangadi Venkataramanappa
28. ,, Virabhadrappa, Chikpete
29. ,, Mallaiya, Chikpete
30. ,, Devangada Adappa
31. ,, M. Hanumanta Rao
32. ,, Raja Venkata Subbaiya
33. ,, Polepalli Ramaswami Chetti
34. ,, Pattadi Govindappa
35. ,, Hosamane Banappa
36. ,, Jade Munisamanna
37. ,, Gante Doddanna
38. ,, Gurubasetti
39. ,, Senigara Nanjundappa
40. ,, Mandi Lingappa
41. ,, Chintalaiyana Ramappa
42. ,, Hema Sanjivaiya
43. ,, Alampalli Ramaiya
44. ,, Garadi Dodvirappa
45. ,, Sarvasetti Puttappa
46. ,, Jotinagara Kariyanna

1. At the request of the Plague Commissioner, Mr. A. Gopalacharlu, Secretary to the Srinivasa Mandiram Charities, asked the people assembled if they had anything to say regarding the measures that were being taken by Government for preventing the plague from coming into Bangalore.

Mr. Ahmed Shah, bamboo merchant, thought the prevalence of fever in the City was due to the impurity of the pipe-water. He was supported by a few others, but the Senior Surgeon did not think there was anything wrong with the water.

Mr. Lakshman Rao Sinde, said that unwholesome ghee adulterated with deleterious substances was being sold in the City and largely used by sweet-meat sellers; and that sweet-meat sellers sold stale and unwholesome eatables kept in exposed places, much to the injury of the consumers. Several others present spoke to the same effect. Gingelly oil and even kerosine oil, it was said, was being used by the native confectioners. The Plague Commissioner thought there was some ground for complaint and suggested to the Municipal President that specimens of ghee suspected to be adulterated and likely to be injurious to health might be sent to the Chemical Analyst for examination; and that more might be done in the way of prosecuting persons selling or exposing for sale articles of food injurious to health. The suggestion to insist on all sweet-meat sellers taking out licenses did not appear to receive much support.

Several gentlemen enquired what necessity there was for making arrangements to keep out the plague when it had not yet made its appearance in the City.

The Plague Commissioner explained that it was almost at our threshold, that it was an insidious, deadly and highly infectious disease; that the authorities were still in the dark as to how it spreads, that it may appear any day in the City, and that if it once established itself, it was extremely difficult to stamp it out. No remedy, European, Yunani, or Hindu, had up to now been discovered for the dire disease. The only way of protecting themselves was to keep out men and things likely to convey the infection and to attend to sanitation both private and public. It was further explained to the meeting that it was most important to detect the first case and isolate it.

The authorities were anxious that in carrying out the measures, there should be no violence to the customs and habits of the people. Government did not interfere in cases of ordinary disease, but plague was a highly infectious disease and it was necessary, in the interests of the public, that every precaution should be taken that persons attacked were at once segregated and were not allowed to infect the neighbourhood.

With this view, the authorities proposed to introduce what is called the "Supervision System" details of which are given in the Notification published in the *Mysore Gazette*. Briefly put, it meant that the City was to be divided into wards or blocks; each ward consisting of 100 to 150 houses; one or two leading men living in the wards would be asked under the advice of a Medical Board consisting of an English, Karnatic, and Yunani physician to visit the houses in the ward and bring to the notice of the Superintendent, who was to be in charge of these operations, any cases of plague or death from plague in his ward with a view to the parties being segregated.

It was unnecessary to repeat that lady doctors would invariably examine women suspected to be suffering from plague.

The meeting need not be troubled with the details of the census to be taken, of the forms prescribed and the orders about improved methods of reporting deaths. It will suffice to say that all these precautions were being taken for the benefit of the towns-people and would be worked by their own agency and by methods which were familiar to them and which therefore should not offend their social and religious susceptibilities.

It was further proposed to have camps at convenient places outside the City for the different classes of the community where they could have their sick treated and the persons who had been in contact with the sick segregated and attended to in accordance with their own caste customs and treated according to their own system of medicine.

Every arrangement would be made for "gosha" being strictly observed.

It behoved the richer among each community to put up sheds for their caste-men on sites selected by the authorities. For the benefit of the poorer classes the Municipality had put up hospitals and segregation sheds where the poor will be treated, fed and clothed at public cost.

It was not absolutely necessary that affected persons should be removed to sheds, if houses in or near the affected area with a large compound and with plenty of air and sun-shine could be placed at the disposal of the authorities. They could be utilised for the benefit of the sick in mohallas close by; and even as regards persons attacked with the plague, removal to camps outside the City was not absolutely necessary if a good well-ventilated and sufficiently isolated part of the house could be made available for the patient. But it had been found by experience that isolution to camps away from the close atmosphere of the towns was best both in the interests of the sick and of those who were in contact with them as well as of those that lived in the neighbourhood.

Everything was being done in the way of opening out conservancy lanes and cleaning and flushing the drains.

The President was taking steps to prevent overcrowding, and to let in air and sunshine into houses which have been for years strangers to these health-giving agencies.

The Government will soon be moved to aid the Municipality with funds and also with skilled agency for giving the City a regular system of drainage and conservancy.

Mr. Sheer Khan enquired why the disease prevailed in Bombay in spite of all precautions. The Plague Commissioner said because precautions were not taken in time.

Mr. Muhammed Ghouse here referred to the question of supplying houses with pipe-water at small cost and said the present system placed many obstacles in the way of house service which was essential for drinking purposes and also for cleaning the drains. The Plague Commissioner said he would make a note of the matter.

Continuing, the speaker said that the people of the City were strongly against segregation.

The Plague Commissioner explained that it was a mistake to look upon Government as different from the people and think that the Government were forcing its measures on the people. Government, he would repeat, never interfered when there was ordinary disease in a house or even when there was cholera. But the meeting should remember that plague was a different matter. He admitted that segregation was an evil, but it had to be enforced for preventing an infinitely greater evil.

Mr. Timmappa, Mandi Merchant, said there was no necessity for segregation and that all that was needed was to make the sanitation of the City so thorough that the plague could not enter it.

Mr. Gopalacharlu explained, at the instance of Dr. Benson, that sanitation would take time but the plague would not wait.

Mr. Timmappa then suggested that the Gods should be propitiated.

Mr. Gopalacharlu here explained at length the nature of the disease and the paramount necessity that existed for taking the vigorous measures mentioned by the Plague Commissioner.

At the instance of Dr. Benson, it was explained to the meeting that air and sun-shine were the best preventives of the plague. In Bombay though the total number of deaths was enormous, not one soldier, sepoy, or bairagi had died of the plague. It was due to the fact that these people lived either in the open air or in well-ventilated houses.

Mr. Narainsami Setti brought to the notice of the Plague Commissioner that the prices of food grains and other articles of consumption had gone up considerably owing to the scare of the plague preventive measures.

The Plague Commissioner said that the alarm was groundless.

The Plague Commissioner wanted to get the sense of the meeting about the two questions discussed, *viz.*, the systems of supervision and segregation. About segregation he said there was no need to take immediate action.

Mr. Narainsami Setti explained that people had wrong notions about what Government intended doing, and said they were agreeable to the supervision system if it was carried out on the lines indicated by the Plague Commissioner.

It was announced to the meeting that Dr. Benson had undertaken to deliver a lecture on the plague in the district office compound some day next week.

The following is published for general information and for the information and guidance of all officers on Plague duty.

The 17th February 1898.

Intimation has been received from the Hyderabad Residency that plague in an epidemic form is reported to exist in the Naldrug and Gulbarga districts of His Highness the Nizam's Territory. The Railway stations in the latter (on the G. I. P. Railway) are Kulali, Ghangapur, Saraldgi, Gulbarga, Murtur, Shahabad and Wadi; and passengers from them should be deemed with reference to the regulations under the Epidemic Diseases Regulation, to have come from an "infected area."

V. P. MADHAVA RAO,
Plague Commissioner in Mysore.